

The Blessing of God

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[0:00] yeah so Genesis 26 sorry 27 6 to 29 Rebecca said to her son Jacob I heard your father speak to your brother Esau bring me game and prepare for me delicious food that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die now therefore my son obey my voice as I command you go to the flock and bring me two good young goats so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father such as he loves and you shall bring it to your father to eat so that he may bless you before he dies but Jacob said to Rebecca his mother behold my brother Esau is a hairy man and I'm a smooth man perhaps my father will feel me and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing his mother said to him let your curse be on me my son only obey my voice and go bring them to me so he went and took them and brought them to his mother and his mother prepared delicious food such as his father loved then Rebecca took the best garments of Esau her older son which were with her in the house and put them on Jacob her younger son and the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck and she put the delicious food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob so he went into his father and said my father and he said here I am who are you my son Jacob said to his father I am Esau your firstborn

I have done as you told me now sit up and eat of my game that your soul may bless me but Isaac said to his son how is it that you found it so quickly my son he answered because the Lord your God granted me success then Isaac said to Jacob please come near that I may feel you my son to know whether you are really my son Esau or not so Jacob went near to Isaac his father who felt him and said the voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau and he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands so he blessed him he said are you really my son Esau he answered I am then he said bring it near to me that I may eat of my son's game and bless you so he brought it near to him and he ate and he brought him wine and he drank then his father Isaac said to him come near and kiss me my son so he came near and kissed him and Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said see the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed may God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine let people serve you and nations bow down to you be lord over your brothers and may your mother's sons bow down to you cursed be everyone who curses you and blessed be everyone who blesses you it's good to be back at church and especially seeing Alex and and Liz giving us in music as well and also glad to see the Smith family back with verses too for these two weeks I'll be talking about the story of a cha ego it started in March when I promised the church in Malaysia that when I when I went back or go back there supposed to be next week then I'll be helping them out because they don't have a pastor to preach for three weeks three Sundays and I said I will be talking about the story of a cha ego a cha ego why is that so it's because a lot of time when we especially when we go back to Malaysia and attend weddings the if it's a christian christian wedding then the pastors or people there will in prayer they always say god will bless this family and and that is the the main theme almost in all the christian weddings and it's about god's blessing and the and it's about god's blessing on the families however I always have this feeling that maybe people don't actually understand what it meant to be blessed by god do you do you really want to be blessed that's what my mind is thinking when when people are using this word blessing so lightly and as if it is something that is comfortable or easy in the bible we shall see that is not or that that is the case not the case

I think we you could blessing with happiness or blessedness with happiness but in the bible blessing is a type of happiness but it's a type of happiness that can only be experienced if you're holy so it comes to holiness if there's no holiness there's no blessedness and that's why if we may ask god why are you so busy trying to make us holy just make me happy but god will say i can't

make you happy until you're holy otherwise the happiness you're you're going through is not the real real thing and we shall see that in in this story in this coming today and next week hopefully I as I prepare this sermons I I just get so so much out of it I it's just so much to talk about even in I thought even in three sermons for back in Malaysia if I go back eventually it won't be enough to finish the story and as you read even as just you read in the bible you read that

Jacob told his mom my brother is a hairy man and I'm a smooth man even even if that has this very interesting double meaning in it he's definitely Jacob is a smooth man he's smooth he's even talking to the mom smoothly he's trying to get the mom to take the blame and he couldn't he doesn't so he's very smooth in that case but it's very interesting as you read deeper into it and it just so much inside that you can we can get out of it and see God's amazing work in people shall we pray before we start let's pray Father God we thank you for this time that we could spend in your word and we want to hear you speaking to us and we also want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ for his freedom on the cross for us to really enjoy your blessing thank you Lord we pray in Jesus name

Amen so just now the story already Alex has shared with us so most of us would know about this story about Esau and Jacob one thing I think you may not notice is the fact that when Jacob was holding Esau's heel at birth it means that he will need to come out of the birth can now with his head and arm together which is very rare in birth usually the baby won't come out if you do that you either have a caesarean section or you try to push the hand arm back in before the baby comes out if you feel that the baby if the midwife or the doctor fell there and to to do that it means that Jacob must be quite smaller much smaller than Esau smaller head at least for him to to come through physically and that also have implication to know why

[8 : 48] Jacob ended inside the house while Esau was a hunter and and that also I mean explain why Jacob is so keen to inherit this the blessing you can imagine imagine that for Jacob to be secure in future it's very hard he learned to cook with the mom but at that day and age cooking skill for men is really not much of a use you need to be outdoor you need to be able to hunt or plant or be a shepherd of some sort for Jacob it is quite hopeless isn't it in terms of for his future and that's how we can feel for him in terms of why he wanted that blessing so desperately and how did they know about this blessing it's just because the blessing was initially given to Abraham their grandfather

Abraham was still alive during their birth for 15 until they are 15 years old and Abraham died so they would have heard from Abraham and also their father Isaac about God's blessing and promise to this special family that God said that they will be made into a great nation and through them all the families of the earth shall be blessed there's the summary of the blessing and this blessing is being passed from generation to generation just one person though just one person in each generation inherit this blessing and that person as they look at Abraham and Isaac will become rich and strong and that's why Jacob wanted that blessing you notice that God says that all the families of the earth shall be blessed it's quite interesting to see that God didn't use all the nations of the earth to be blessed all the people all the languages but he said all the families why all the families we can see even in this family now looking at

Isaac Rebecca Esau and Jacob as a family we can see why this family really needs that blessing and why we do as well so in Genesis so sorry Jacob had two obstacles for him to inherit the blessing the first one is the fact that he wasn't the firstborn and the inheritance usually given to the firstborn first the rest would get a bit of it but majority will be given to the firstborn and the second is the fact that his father loved Esau more than loving him or more than him Genesis 25 28 says that Isaac loved Esau because he acts of his game but Rebecca loved Jacob Esau could be disappointed in Jacob because he had wished that Jacob would go out hunting like a man instead Jacob learned to cook like a woman we don't know why but we don't know why Isaac had that feeling but there's a possibility however we can we see that

Jacob is a very smart man he was able to even make use of his cooking skill to get what he wanted so as we saw just now he exchanged Esau's birthright with his stew so he somehow got his first obstacle first problem settled at least apparently Isaac said well you can have my birthright whether Isaac made it we don't know I mean when you're hungry you can you will say anything and that's how it works and this today's story we come to the point where Jacob trying to solve his second problem that the father would not give him the blessing because the father would not like him to start with so at this point of the story we come to the part when we think about partiality when we look at the fact that

Isaac loved Esau Rebecca loved Jacob and this is partiality we are all we all have this problem we're all partial people in the sense that none of us is complete unless we're in Christ but we are partial in the sense that because we all have needs unmet needs so we tend to favor people who give us or satisfy our needs or give us more joy so that is very natural for us to do however as parents one of the things that parents would learn is to love their children because they are their children not because of how their children perform or how their children meet their needs if the parents love their children in a partial way then the children in turn will learn to love their parents in a partial way as well in times to come and we can see that the partiality in the family does a lot of damage to the child both the child who is partial or who is favored and the child who are not favored so the child who is favored would usually become very proud and careless because the parents would do now and it's the type of families that we all grew up in and so it's very relevant for [15 : 04] God to say that through Abraham's offspring all families of will be blessed so we know that it's only lateral for Isaac wanting to pass the blessing to the firstborn regardless of who he loves however before the birth of the twins God already told them that the older shall serve the younger so that is when Rebecca had the twins fighting inside she was in much trouble and God told them about this already but Isaac like the rest of the family did not take God's word seriously you know almost none of them took God's word seriously except maybe Esau surprisingly you thought that Esau was a rough or careless man in the sense that if Esau really understood what God meant he would say oh you want to be the first one go ahead I would rather be the younger one because God said that the older should serve the younger so why on earth did Jacob want to be the older if God already said that the older shall serve the younger but there is us I suppose we don't listen to God and if they did then all these things would not have happened but then in here we need to consider one question is that is God showing partiality in choosing the younger to be served by the older even before they were born even before they show whether they're good or bad nothing before they were born God already said that is there a partiality we will consider this in the next sermon which is on God of the blessing first I titled the sermon God of blessing I the saw Jacob being a smart man he was a bit reluctant he knew that it's a big risk if he did nothing at least he could stay on maybe the brother would talk after him but if he tried to get the blessing and fail he could be cast out of the family he could lose everything and so he thought about it but then his mom reassured him that it's all right will take the plan whatever happens well you know that Jacob there's too good a chance not to take up and that's why he went with the plan and Rebecca prepared three things for him that is delicious food such as Isaac love Esau's garment with Esau's smell and the skin of the young goat which she killed for the food so Isaac was old he had blood vision his eyes were most affected by cataracts he thought he heard Jacob's voice but he tasted Esau's food and he felt Esau's hairy hands and smell Esau's smell so after Isaac ate and drank he blessed Jacob as we read from verse 27 to 29 so Jacob came near and kissed him and Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said see the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed may God give you all the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine let people serve you and nations bow down to you be lord over your brothers and may your mother's sons bow down to you curse be everyone who cursed you and blessed be everyone who blesses you so there are three things Isaac mentioned there are three things in particular I would like to mention in these three verses one is fragrance smell two is security to do with harvest number three is significance to do with honor so there's fragrance from yang we learn to distinguish what frequency like what frequency and what stent different people may have different but at least for each of us there are smells that we like and smells that we don't like and we associate fragrance with love cleanliness purity acceptance warmth and stench with danger or decay filth something that we just want to avoid and we all use or we not all most of us can use perfume to promote our acceptance by others which is a very profitable business in the world so the frequency is very important in here and [20 : 52] Isaac blessed Jacob because he smelled the frequency of food and Esau's garment and so while Esau not knowing it or given his birthright to Jacob now in practice Jacob already taken up this Esau's identity to get the father's acceptance and the blessing and inside the blessing he mentions about security as he said may God give you of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine the fact that Isaac emphasized this in the blessing tells us that it is not natural to have good harvest from our labors as a consequence of man's rebellion against

God the ground became infertile in Genesis chapter 3 verses 17 to 19 we read and to Adam he said because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the three of which

I commended you you shall not eat of it curse is a ground because of you in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life fawns and teasels it shall bring forth to you and you shall eat the plants of the field by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken for your dust and to dust you shall return out of your people and you will know life is difficult we invest our life in our time for a secure future we spend time and energy in education occupation or next generation and many a time we do not get much fruit from our labor years Jacob spent his time learning how to cook there was no restaurant then and so Jacob's scale was not going to be of much use for him to provide for himself and for his own family so he desperately lead to this blessing of God for his own survival in years to come in the story did Jacob become secure at the end in a way he did but only through much hardship he didn't get it quite very easily and then there's seven years of famine and he lost a lot of things it's only through his son Joseph that he already got security in provided him in Egypt that was before he died okay so the next one in the blessing is about significance as Isaac said let people serve you and nations bow down to you be lord over your brothers and your mother's sons bow down to you curse be everyone who curses you and blessed be everyone who blesses you so the two things that

Jacob would need most of all of us would need security and significance so the blessing of this promise that the significant in him been honored by everyone Jacob wished that his father would approve him he wished that Isaac would tell him well done my son I think that's what he was longing for he also wished that his brother Esau would take him seriously and respected him so he wanted to prove himself to be worthy of honor but what could he do he hasn't spent much time outdoor he didn't know how to do outdoor work and learning how to cook would bring Jacob more dishonor than honor at that time people know how to cook it's a woman's job why it's an honor and so for Jacob not only security he needs significance he needs respect but did he get it at the end in a way he's also in a way he did but as we read the story even his own family his own children didn't respect him much until

Joseph his son became the prime minister of Egypt and then took him to Egypt and Jacob met with the Egyptian Pharaoh and blessed this king of Egypt imagine being able to bless the most powerful man in the world at that time so it is quite a significant thing that he did in life so while those promises of blessing didn't actually come true as Jacob thought it would be but in some way he did get some of it fulfilled in his life but a lot of it need to be fulfilled much later not during his lifetime so when Esau knew about this Jacob's deception he became very angry and he wanted to kill Jacob but at least Esau respected the father so he said I won't kill Jacob until our father

Isaac died and when Rebecca knew about this plan Rebecca devised another plan so he requested Isaac to send Jacob to their home country to get a wife the home country means that both Isaac and Rebecca came from that area Abraham came first from the area and then Abraham's servant went back there to get Rebecca and so Isaac and Rebecca got married and now Rebecca asked Isaac to send Jacob back to Haram where they came from and to their uncle's place and well Isaac agreed and so Jacob left in a hurry I suppose we will continue the story next week but Jacob did not know that he would become stuck in his uncle's place for 20 years after he left and during these 20 years

[27 : 24] Jacob went through a lot of suffering we will read that if you got chance in future he actually talked about his suffering at the end when his uncle was chasing after him meanwhile over the 20 years Esau became quite a strong and wealthy family wealthy clan so it's quite paradoxical in a sense that the blessing that Esau didn't get for Esau to develop into a very powerful family strong family while Jacob was suffering and also Rebecca I suppose she suffered as well because she never saw Jacob again since then I couldn't imagine how hard it would be for them to be apart and Rebecca died and Jacob didn't even know that his mom died over those 20 years until he went back home so this is the blessing that

Jacob thought he would get but not knowing that it was the blessing we will go through that but before we do that we think about this story of the issue of communication so we talk about partiality in the family and communication in the family is also a very difficult thing we can ask why didn't Isaac call a family conference to talk about the problem created by Jacob's deception why didn't Jacob just apologize to Isaac and Esau and settle the things into running away and why didn't Isaac resolve the issue with Rebecca and talk about their differences in terms of their treatment with the

children if Jacob would explain he just wanted respect from the father and the brother and he just wanted some security for the future maybe he wouldn't need to run away but this is this is life isn't it there are many times we just could not explain ourselves for whatever reasons sometimes we don't even know why we do something but many times

I think we fear that when we talk about deep inside other people would either look down on us or ignore us we don't want to be rejected or sometimes we fear that we might escalate the problem make it worse as we try to explain all of us have I think problem with explaining ourselves it's not only a man's problem I think women as well even though we can say that women talk a lot but many times you still don't talk what is deep inside talk what is superficial and that is how it is especially in the family when we cannot communicate well and most families like this including my own family there's a lot of restlessness a lot of trouble inside our hearts and that is we can hope that we can sort of feel this for Isaac and

Rebecca and Jacob are most of Esau because Esau is quite a rough man he may not think much but all these things make up of this family and maybe our families as well so because because of this blessing Jacob needed to run away and the family broke apart so what kind of blessing is this what sort of blessing did Jacob get so the blessing of God is much greater than Isaac and Jacob could imagine we'll see next week that God wanted to bless all the families of the earth not just Isaac's family and Jacob's family so Abraham Isaac Jacob and their descendants were just the pieces of jigsaw parcel God was putting together so that this blessing may come true so that's one way of seeing it but

God was not using just using Jacob as a tool regardless of your experience you just fulfill my plan but God is not this sort of God and it's wonderful to see how God actually was blessing Jacob as he went through all the troubles as he unknowingly fulfilling God's plan to bring about this great blessing God was at the same time blessing Jacob even though Jacob didn't think that at that time but through the sufferings Jacob became a very skillful shepherd he never imagined that he would become one he wanted to he wished that he would he got there not because it's easy but because somehow God led him through that way and he became one and he mature into someone who knew

[33 : 00] God he learned to fear God and trust God and that made a big difference in his life do you see Isaac Rebecca Esau and Jacob in yourself I do I think in different times I can see one or the other playing in my life but today I just want to talk about Jacob the second born who was desperately trying to get the blessing from his father let me read to you a message from a woman named June who is the daughter of my high school friend that's what she wrote to me two weeks ago I felt I was neglected I always overachieved to get attention but I always did not feel I get enough attention from my mom and I think she always treats others better than she treats me you notice so many always in the sentences that's how she felt and this one what we feel when we talk about how other people treat us we use the word always even though it's not usually true for this interesting encounter with her

Leigh and I knew this family well every time we went back to Malaysia my friend and her husband would take us out for meals and we talked for hours for many things but they are not Christians and Jun two years ago Jun gave birth to her first daughter and then she got very bad post natal depression and I think the breakup relationship between her and the mom surface then I didn't know about this breakup I just knew there was some problem because my friend had been asking me to talk to her daughter they live in different towns so they don't live in the same town so she asked her I sensed there was a problem but she couldn't tell me what the problem was until two weeks ago when the daughter wrote this I realized there is such a deep problem between them on the surface in the family as they younger we couldn't see anything unusual they are just like a normal family

I couldn't see any my friend is very even though she's not a Christian but she's quite a good in terms of person I just couldn't imagine that she would do that to her daughter but there's something that they couldn't communicate inside the family and how do we solve this problem how do we solve Jun's problem with her mom how do we solve the problem for Jacob and the family and we think deeper about it is difficult difficult to solve until until we have God as our reference and as our guide yeah for Jun is very very difficult in terms of trying to help her she absolutely would not want to believe in God and she said that there's no right or wrong everybody can have their own opinions of things things happen whether it's convenient whether it's efficient whether it it shoots the purpose

of the society but it's not right or wrong it just there's no such standard when a person thought like this is very hard to help without even that concept of right or wrong in terms of if there's no right or wrong how do you then say that your mom was wrong in the way she treated you which I wouldn't challenge her on that because I don't think she would be able to withstand that sort of challenge but she you see her daughter is more than two years old now within two to three

I can only tell her I wish that you would tell your daughter there's something right or wrong it's time to come I couldn't imagine how you can bring out a child without saying that there's something that's right or wrong how do you bring a child before that even but that's how people think in this day and age so even before right or wrong before you can come to God before God then a lot of problem is difficult to be resolved and so these families are stuck in this cycle of disharmonia and on the surface they might pretend that everything is alright but deep inside people are hurting and not knowing how to resolve the problem so how are all the families on earth going to be blessed through

Abraham it comes from Abraham's descendant Jesus Christ after men rebel against God our hearts become fealty what we think what we do have become a stench to God like Jacob we may feel lucky if we manage to deceive someone for our own gain not knowing that we are becoming more and more rotten inside for God to accept us he needs to first change our stench into a fragrance to God there is only one person who has fragrance that is Jesus Christ the son of God Jesus obeyed God joyfully even unto death on the cross on the cross Jesus offered himself a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God Ephesians 5 2 and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God we do not need to steal the fragrance of Jesus to get God's blessing Jesus offers himself for anyone who wants

[39 : 20] God's blessing in Christ we no longer have the need to compete for security and significance with other people because God has given us this significance and security because he loved us so much that Christ would die for us isn't that significant enough and if Christ died for us he will keep us there is security for us and if we have that then God can start blessing us by changing our characters God does this by bringing us through all sorts of sufferings Romans 5 1 5 1 to 5 therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God not only that but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us the blessing of God does not usually come with comfort in fact it usually comes through suffering but it always comes with peace when we know that our sins past present and future have been forgiven and we know that God is in control of everything there will be peace in our hearts as God blesses us we could start to love other people and we could admit our wrong to one another because it doesn't matter anymore my significance is in Christ not in my performance when children do not need to scheme to get parents attention when parents could talk with each other honestly and kindly and when unrelated people can serve one another like a family we know that the blessing that God promised

Abraham has come especially come to us let us pray father god we all all all that we live in a messy world a world that has fallen short of your glory and that even though on the surface we might look happy but deep inside us we are uncertain and we have deep needs that is not met like Jacob oh father we are so thankful for the lord jesus invitation for those who are tired who are heavy laden to come to him and he will give us rest thank you father we pray in jesus name amen let us